



PRAHLAD

A TALE OF DEVOTION FROM THE BHAGAWAT PURANA

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PRAHLAD



PRAHLAD WAS THE SON OF THE ASURA, HIRANYAKASHIPU.

HIRANYAKASHIPU'S BROTHER HIRANYAKSHA HAD BEEN SLAIN BY VISHNU.



O BROTHER ASURAS!
I SHALL DESTROY VISHNU
AND KEEP THE OTHER
GODS IN HEAVEN
SUBDUED.

GO TO EARTH, MY BROTHERS,
AND CRUSH ALL THOSE
WHO WORSHIP
VISHNU.



THE ASURAS, BY NATURE FOND
OF OPPRESSING OTHERS, JOYFULLY
OBEYED THE COMMAND.





WHILE THE ASURAS WERE BUSY HARASSING THE DEVOTEES OF VISHNU,
THE GODS WENT ABOUT PROTECTING THEM.



THE ASURAS RETURNED TO
HIRANYAKASHIPU.

LORD! WE CANNOT
CARRY OUT YOUR ORDERS.
THE SERVANTS OF VISHNU
THWART OUR EFFORTS.



I WILL HAVE
TO MATCH MY
POWERS TO VISHNU'S
TO LORD
OVER THE
THREE
WORLDS!



SO HE BEGAN TO PERFORM
SEVERE PENANCES.

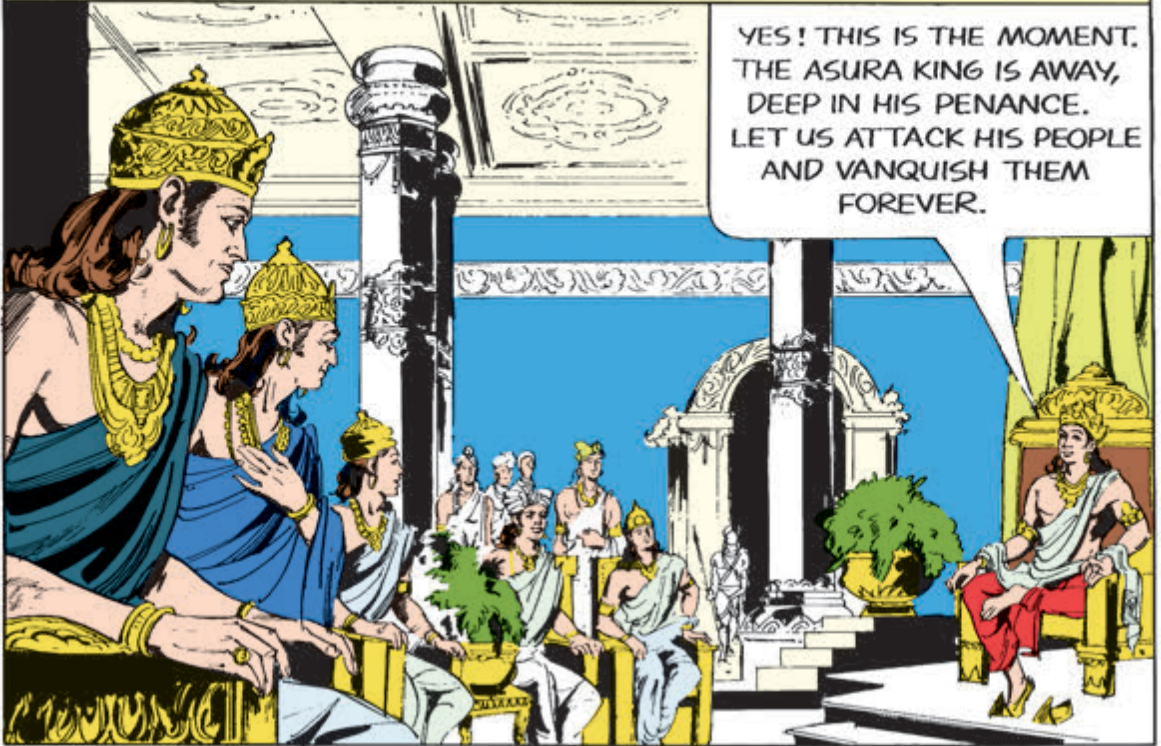


WHEN THE GODS FOUND THAT VISHNU'S
DEVOTEES NO LONGER NEEDED THEIR
PROTECTION THEY RETURNED TO
THEIR HEAVENLY ABODE.



THERE THEY HELD COUNCIL.

YES! THIS IS THE MOMENT.
THE ASURA KING IS AWAY,
DEEP IN HIS PENANCE.
LET US ATTACK HIS PEOPLE
AND VANQUISH THEM
FOREVER.



THE ASURAS WERE PANIC-
STRICKEN.

THE GODS ARE PLANNING
TO ATTACK US. WITHOUT
OUR LORD WE ARE
HELPLESS.

FLEE!

FLEE!



IN THEIR HASTE AND ANXIETY TO
SAVE THEIR OWN LIVES, THEY DID NOT
BOTHER TO TAKE EVEN THEIR WIVES,
CATTLE OR MONEY.

WAIT!

DO NOT LEAVE
US BEHIND!



THE GODS RANSACKED THE ASURA CITY AND DESTROYED HIRANYA-KASHIPU'S PALACE.



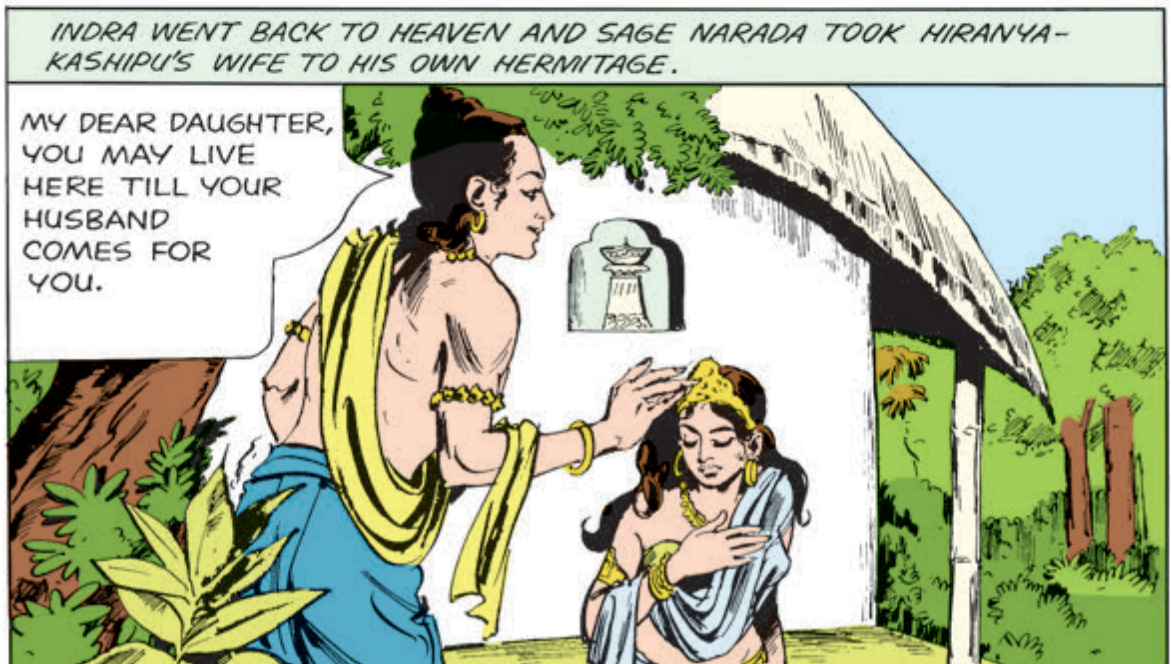
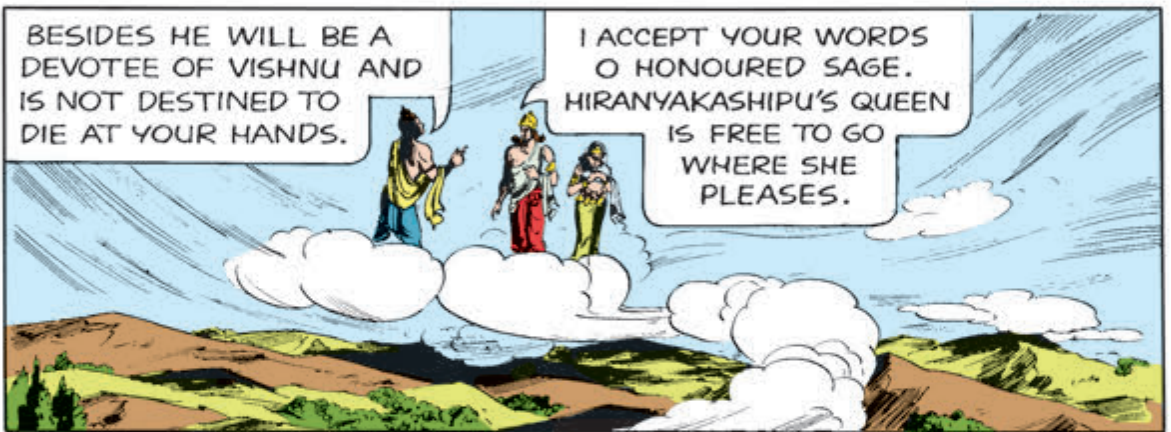
WHILE INDRA WAS TRANSPORTING HER TO HEAVEN, HE MET SAGE NARADA.

WAIT! YOU SHOULD NOT CARRY OFF THIS GUILTLESS QUEEN, THE CHASTE WIFE OF ANOTHER.



SHE IS GOING TO BE THE MOTHER OF HIRANYA-KASHIPU'S SON. SHE SHALL BE WITH ME TILL THE CHILD IS BORN!





SHE LIVED IN THE ASHRAM OF THE GREAT SAGE AND LEARNED ABOUT RELIGION AND THE GLORY OF VISHNU FROM HIM. THE CHILD WITHIN HER, PRAHLAD, TOO, ABSORBED ALL THIS KNOWLEDGE.

VISHNU IS THE SOUL OF ALL CREATED THINGS AND IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE.



IN THE MEANWHILE, WHEN INDRA REACHED HEAVEN—

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

HIRANYAKASHIPU'S
AUSTERITIES ARE
SCORCHING THE
THREE WORLDS.



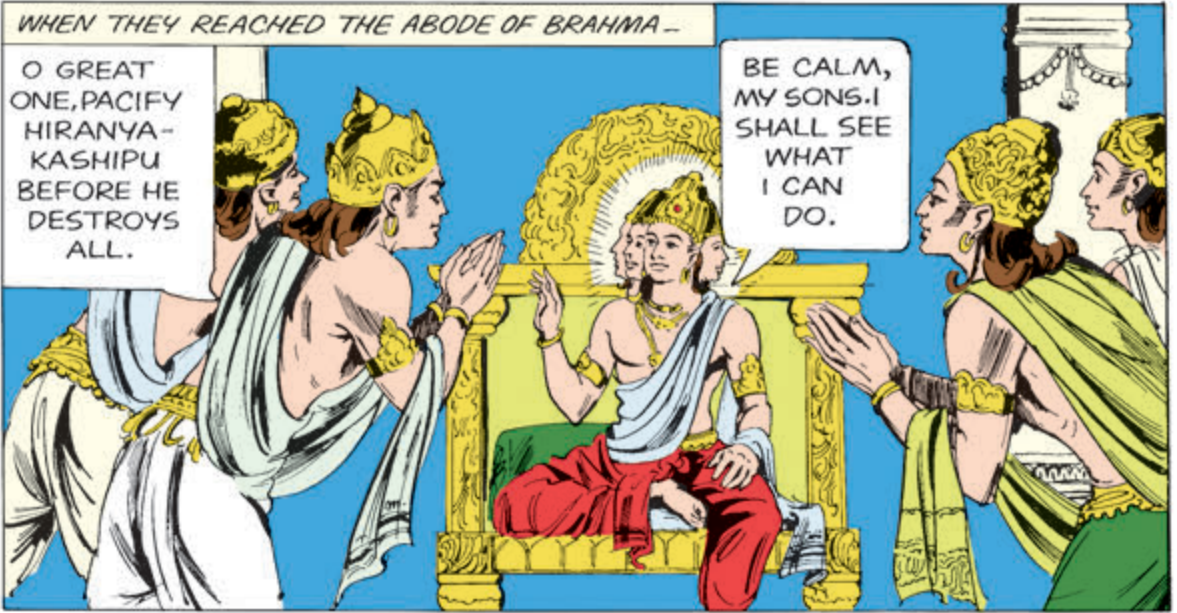
QUICK! LET
US GO TO
BRAHMA,
OUR
CREATOR.



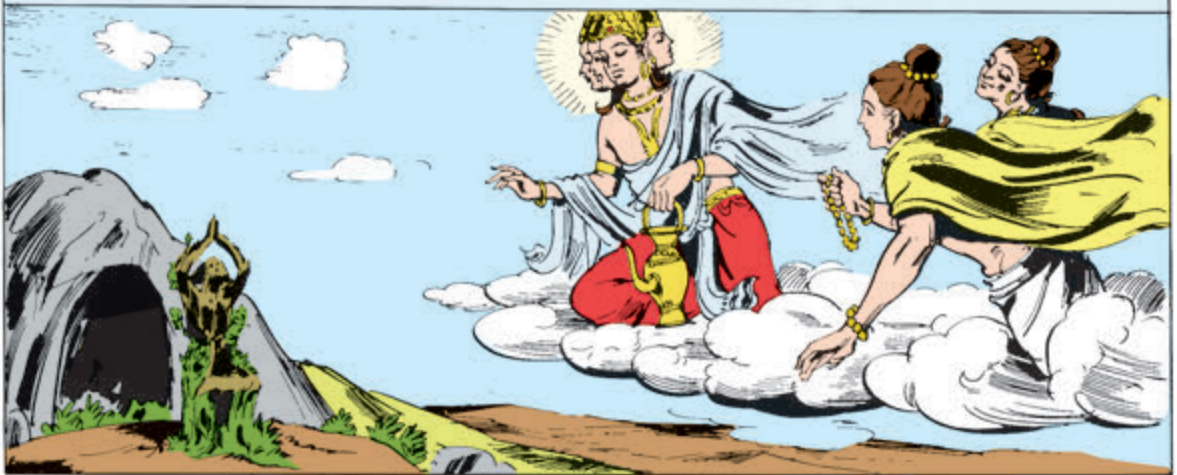
WHEN THEY REACHED THE ABODE OF BRAHMA -

O GREAT ONE, PACIFY HIRANYA-KASHIPU BEFORE HE DESTROYS ALL.

BE CALM, MY SONS. I SHALL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.



THE MIGHTY BRAHMA, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CELESTIAL SAGES, WENT TO HIRANYAKASHIPU'S HERMITAGE.



BRAHMA WAS ASTONISHED BY THE SIGHT.

ARISE HIRANYA-KASHIPU. ANY BOON THAT YOU ASK OF ME SHALL BE YOURS.



AS SOON AS THE DROPS OF BRAHMA'S HOLY WATER TOUCHED HIM, HIRANYAKASHIPU CAME OUT OF HIS TRANCE AND SALUTED BRAHMA.

IF SO, THEN I PRAY THAT MY DEATH BE NOT CAUSED BY MAN OR BEAST, WITH A WEAPON OR WITHOUT, DURING DAY OR NIGHT, INDOORS OR OUTDOORS, ON EARTH OR IN THE SKY. GRANT ME THE UNDISPUTED LORDSHIP OVER THE MATERIAL WORLD.



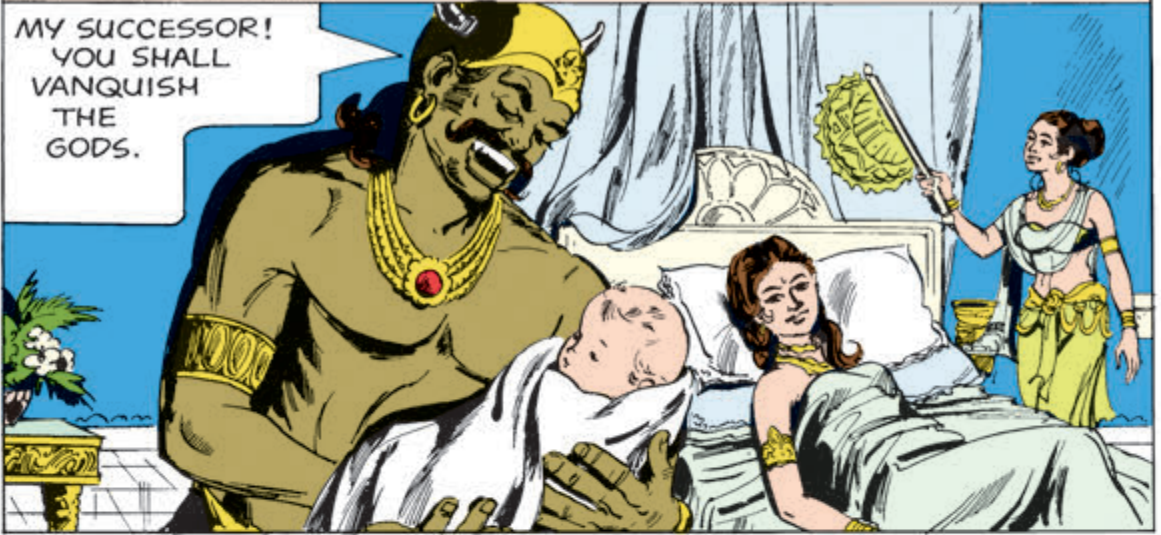
MY SON! THE BOONS YOU HAVE ASKED OF ME ARE OBTAINED WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY. YET I GRANT THEM TO YOU.



BRAHMA DEPARTED AND HIRANYAKASHIPU WAS OVERJOYED.

HIRANYAKASHIPU BROUGHT HIS WIFE BACK TO THEIR CITY WHERE PRAHLAD WAS BORN.

MY SUCCESSOR!
YOU SHALL
VANQUISH
THE
GODS.



HIRANYAKASHIPU, WITH HIS NEW POWERS, RENEWED HIS HOSTILITIES AGAINST VISHNU AND HIS FOLLOWERS.



HE DROVE THE GODS OUT OF THEIR ABODE AND ESTABLISHED HIMSELF IN HEAVEN.



THERE IS NONE
STRONGER THAN I.
I AM THE LORD OF
THE THREE WORLDS.
I SHALL BE WOR-
SHIPPED AS SUCH!

ALL THE GODS IN HEAVEN EXCEPT BRAHMA, VISHNU AND SHIVA, BEGAN TO WORSHIP THE INTOXICATED HIRANYAKASHIPU.



AT LAST THE OPPRESSED GODS AND DEVOTEES OF VISHNU APPEALED TO HIM.



AFTER A FEW DAYS...



THE CELESTIALS WENT AWAY CONSIDERING THE ASURAS AS ALREADY VANQUISHED.

PRAHLAD IN THE MEANWHILE WAS GROWING UP AND WAS HIRANYAKASHIPU'S DELIGHT. ONE DAY...

DEAR SON! TELL ME. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST THING IN LIFE?

TO RENOUNCE THE WORLD AND SEEK REFUGE IN VISHNU.



HIRANYAKASHIPU LAUGHED. THEN HE CALLED HIS SON'S TEACHER TO HIM.

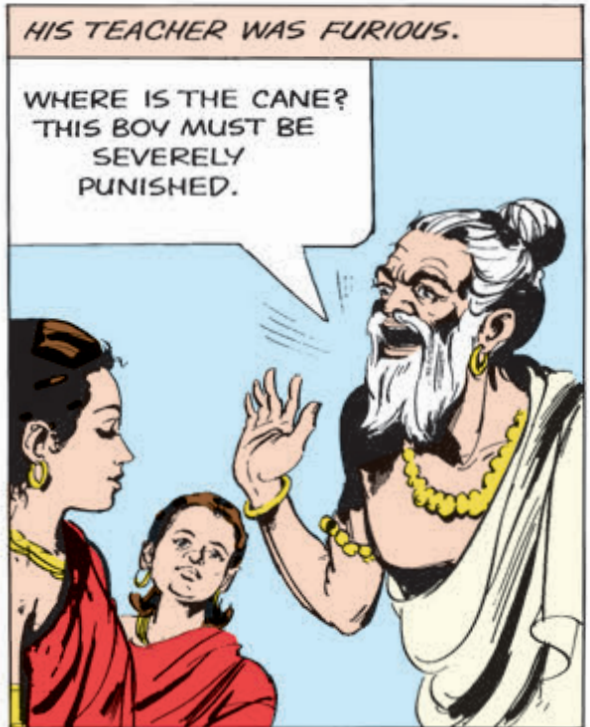
GUARD HIM CLOSELY. I THINK THAT THE FOLLOWERS OF VISHNU ARE SECRETLY INFLUENCING HIM. DON'T LET HIM OUT OF YOUR SIGHT.



PRAHLAD WENT TO LIVE IN THE HOUSE OF HIS TEACHER.

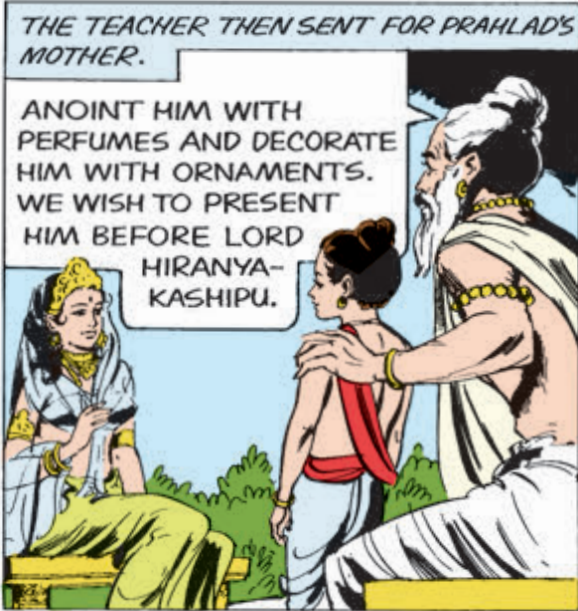
O PRAHLAD! TELL ME THE TRUTH. DO NOT BE AFRAID. WHO HAS SPOKEN TO YOU ABOUT VISHNU?



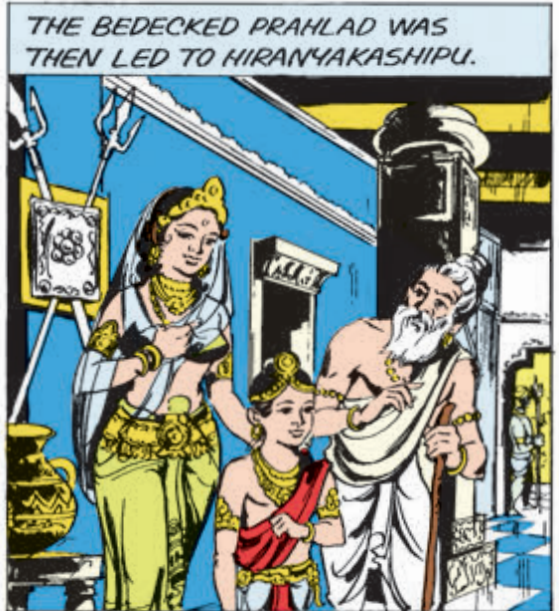


THE TEACHER THEN SENT FOR PRAHLAD'S MOTHER.

ANOINT HIM WITH PERFUMES AND DECORATE HIM WITH ORNAMENTS. WE WISH TO PRESENT HIM BEFORE LORD HIRANYAKASHIPU.

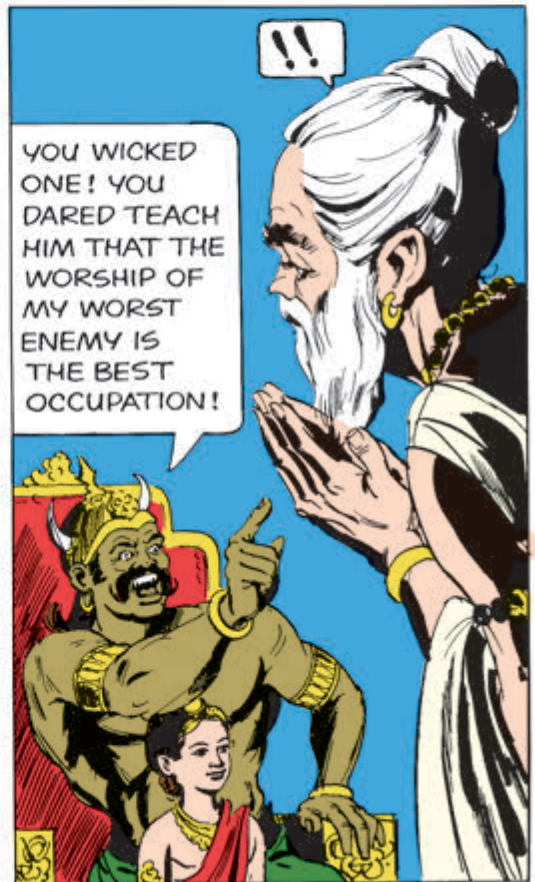


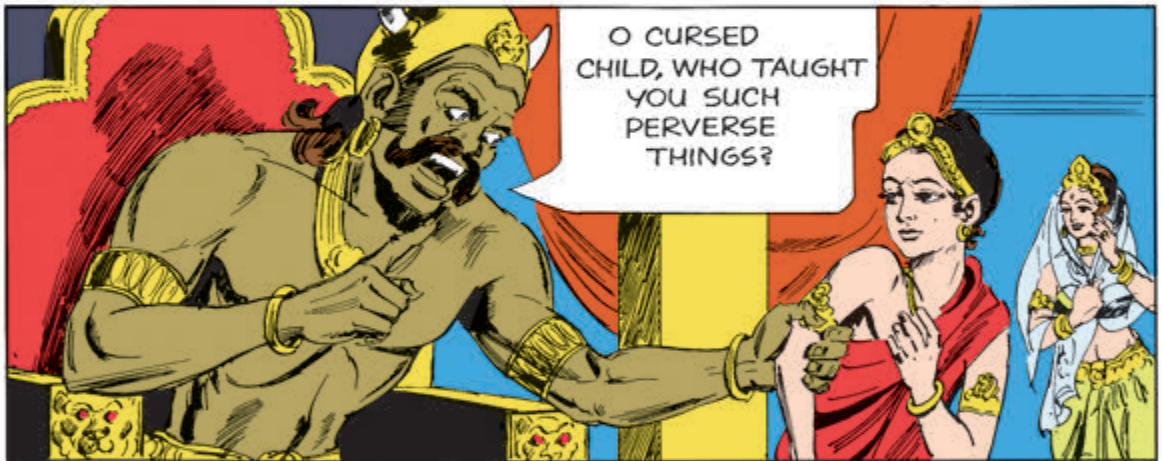
THE BEDECKED PRAHLAD WAS THEN LED TO HIRANYAKASHIPU.

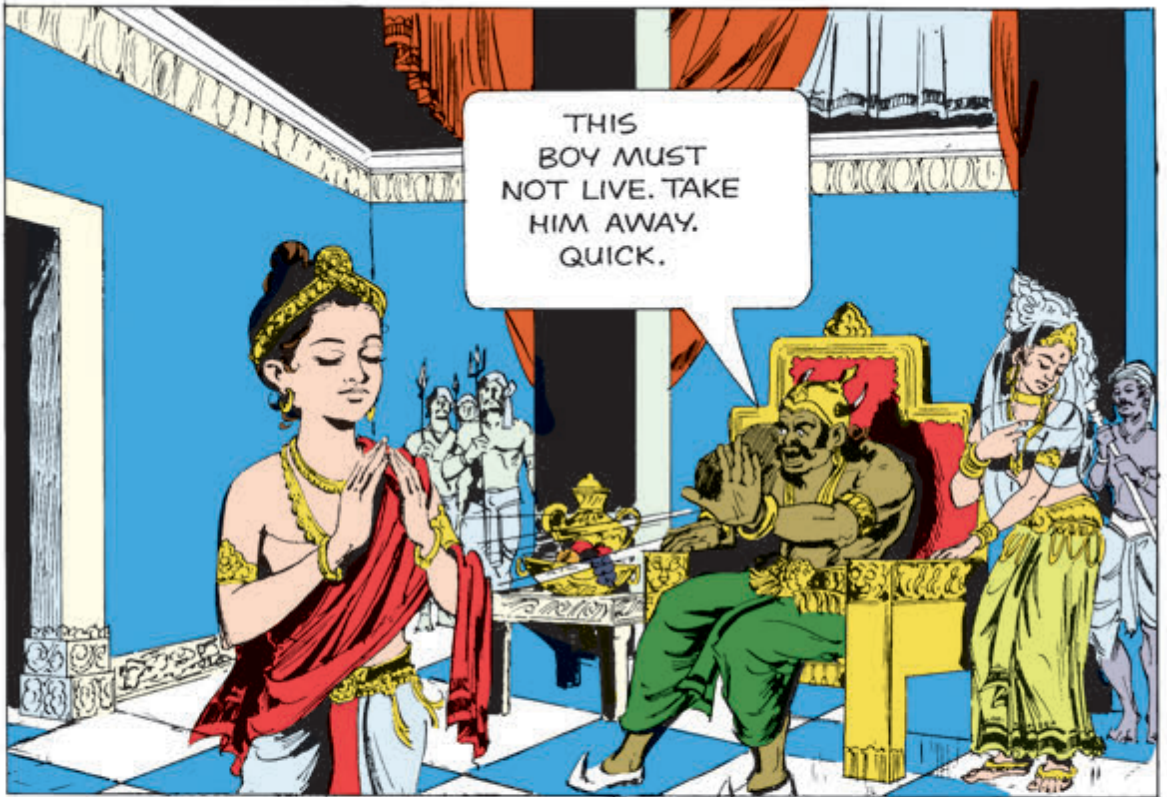


O MY SON! MAY YOU LIVE LONG.







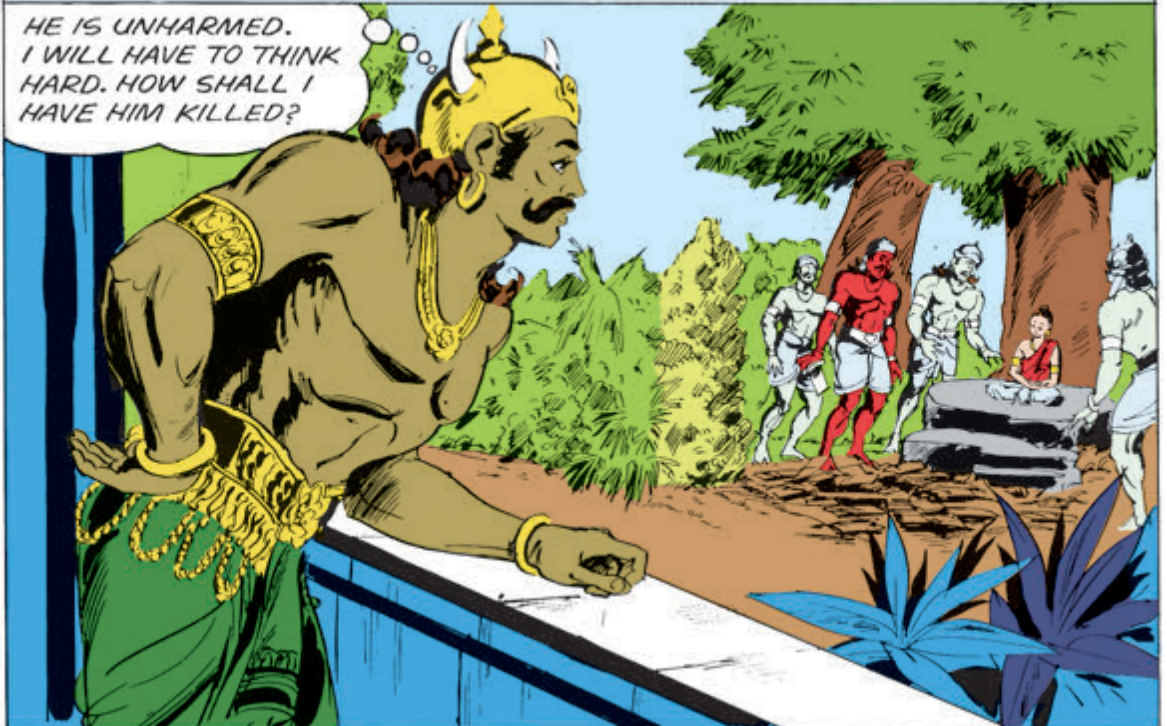


THUS COMMANDED BY HIRANYAKASHIPU, THE ASURAS BEGAN TO ATTACK PRAHLAD.



BUT THEIR STROKES WERE OF NO AVAIL FOR PRAHLAD WAS DEEPLY ENGROSSSED IN HIS ADORATION OF VISHNU.

HE IS UNHARMED.
I WILL HAVE TO THINK
HARD. HOW SHALL I
HAVE HIM KILLED?



HIRANYAKASHIPU HAD THE MOST DEADLY SERPENTS BROUGHT. THEY WERE LET LOOSE ON PRAHLAD. BUT THEIR FANGS TURNED IMPOTENT.



HIRANYAKASHIPU THEN CALLED FOR MIGHTY ELEPHANTS AND MADE THEM TRAMPLE UPON PRAHLAD. BUT ONCE AGAIN IT WAS THE ELEPHANTS THAT WERE INJURED.



THEN HIRANYAKASHIPU HAD HIM
PUSHED OFF A CLIFF AND...



...THROWN INTO A BLAZING FIRE.



BUT NOT A HAIR ON PRAHLAD'S
HEAD WAS SINGED.

IN DESPERATION HIRANYAKASHIPU HAD HIM FED WITH A DEADLY POISON
BUT IT TURNED INTO NECTAR IN PRAHLAD'S MOUTH.





THIS TIME THE TEACHER TRIED TO GET PRAHLAD INTERESTED IN THE MEANS FOR ACQUIRING WEALTH AND PHYSICAL PLEASURES, BUT...

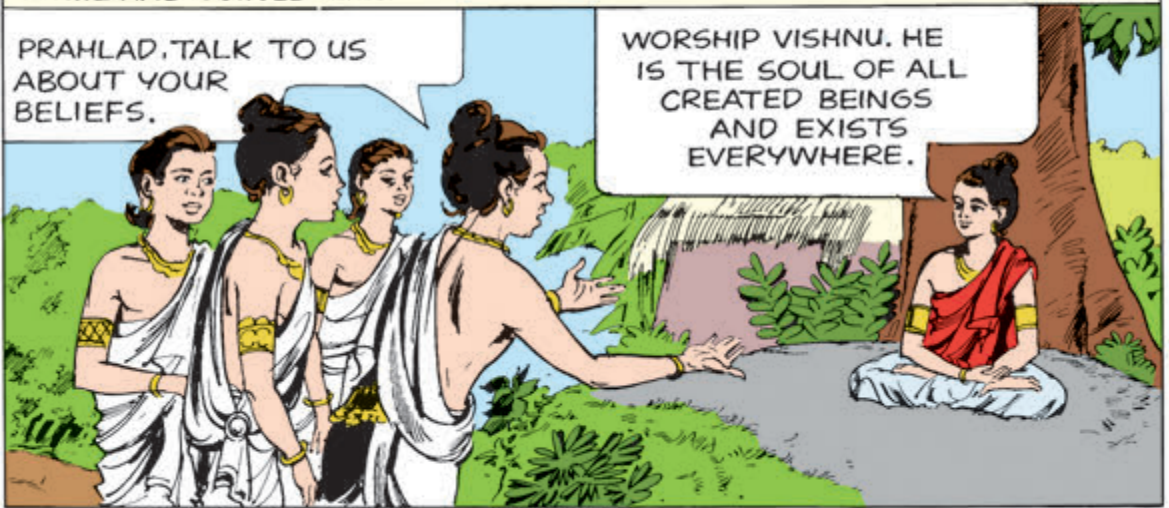
HOW CAN THE PURSUIT OF PHYSICAL PLEASURES AND WEALTH BRING HAPPINESS? IT WILL ONLY LEAD TO ENVY AND ANGER.



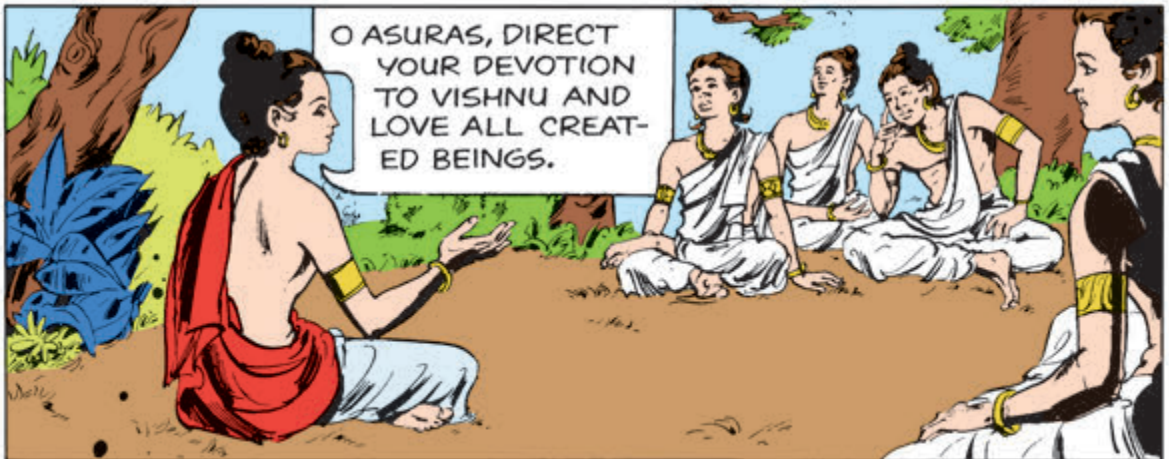
WHILE PRAHLAD WAS ENGAGED IN SUCH THOUGHTS, OTHER PUPILS CAME AND JOINED HIM.

PRAHLAD, TALK TO US ABOUT YOUR BELIEFS.

WORSHIP VISHNU. HE IS THE SOUL OF ALL CREATED BEINGS AND EXISTS EVERYWHERE.

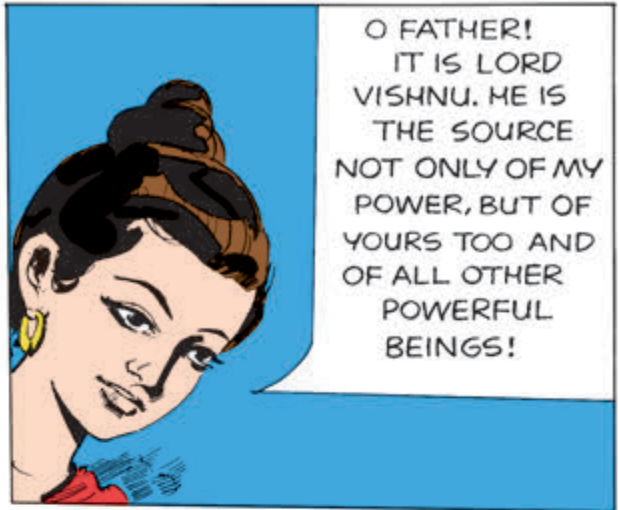


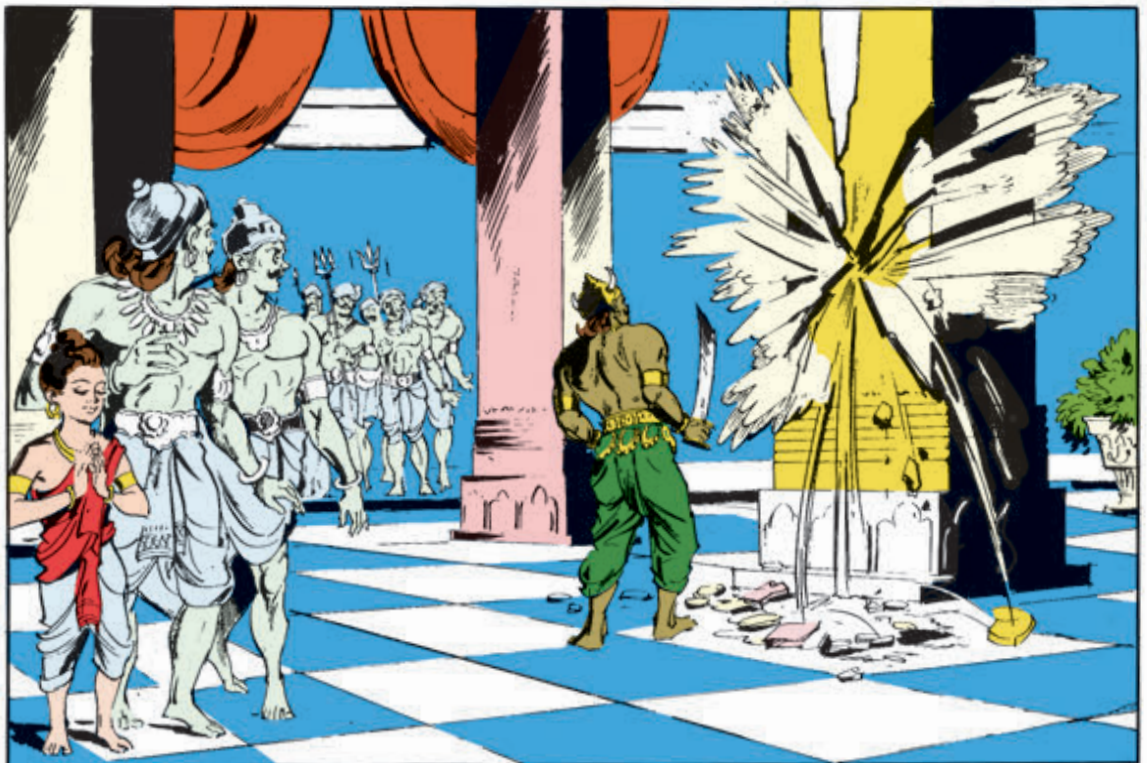
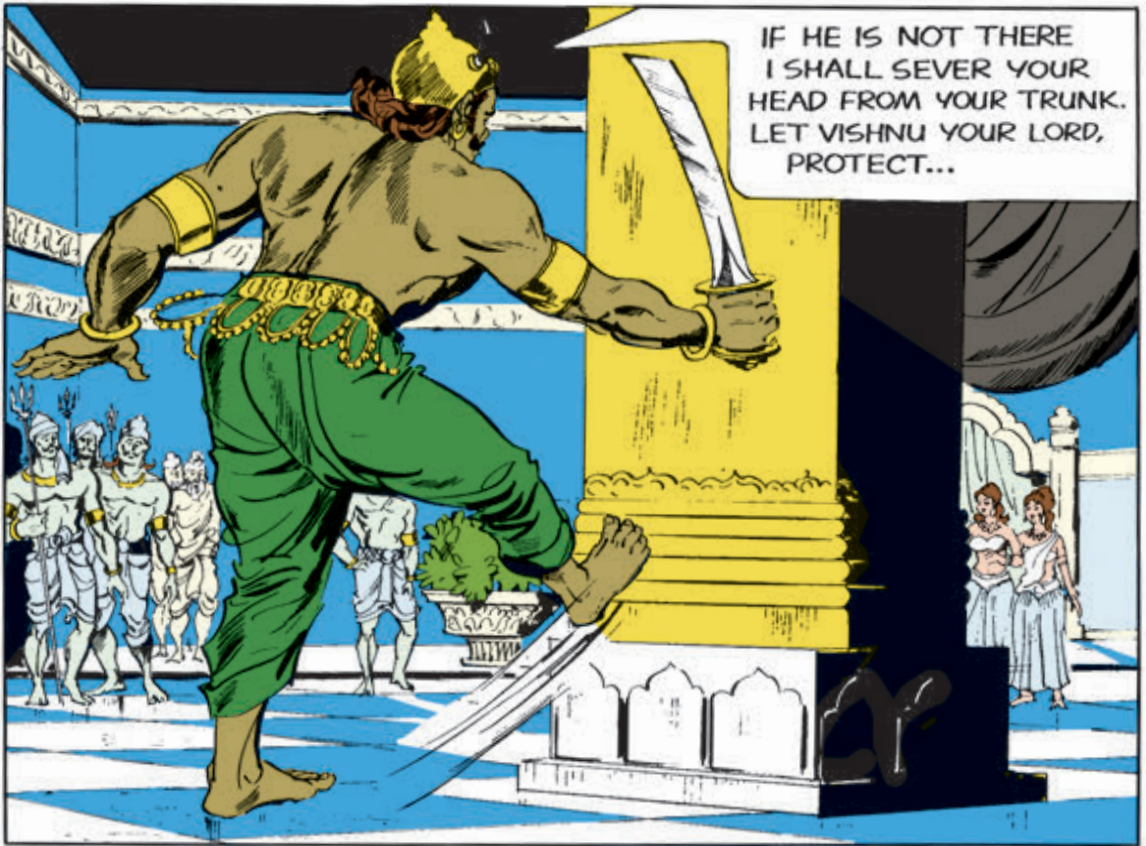
O ASURAS, DIRECT YOUR DEVOTION TO VISHNU AND LOVE ALL CREATED BEINGS.











AND LO! LORD VISHNU IN THE FORM OF *NARA-SIMHA EMERGED FROM THE PILLAR.



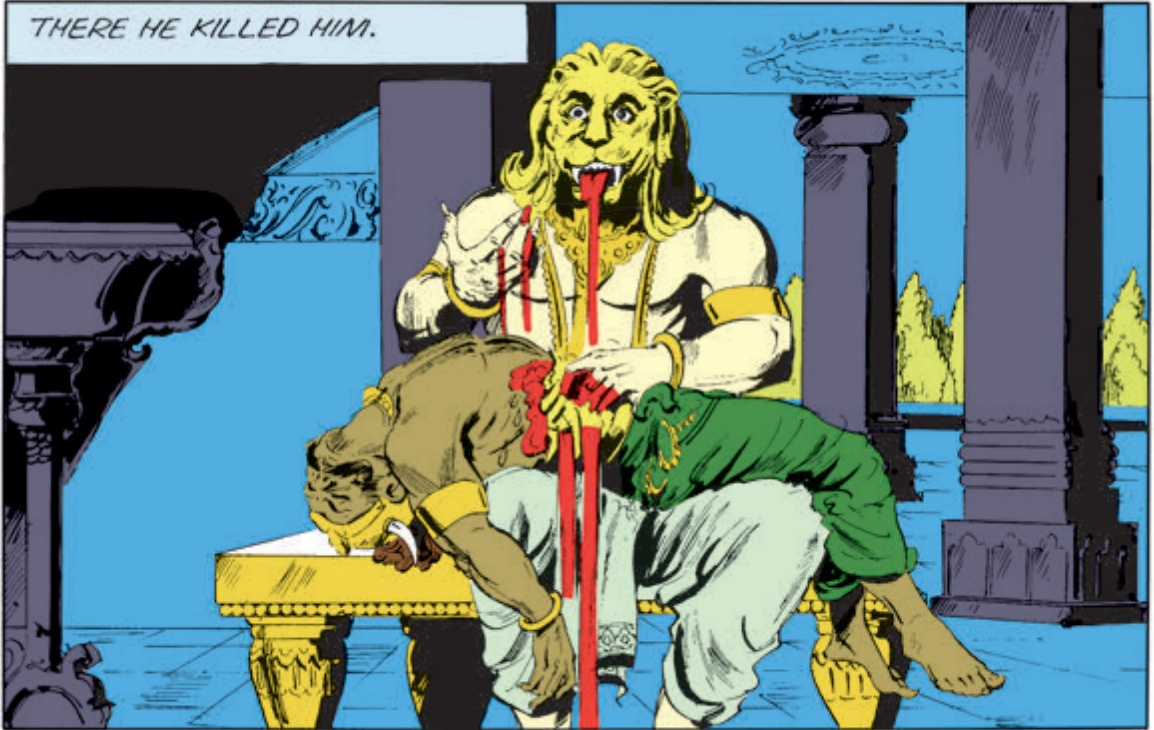
NARA-SIMHA CAUGHT HIRANYA-KASHIPU AND...



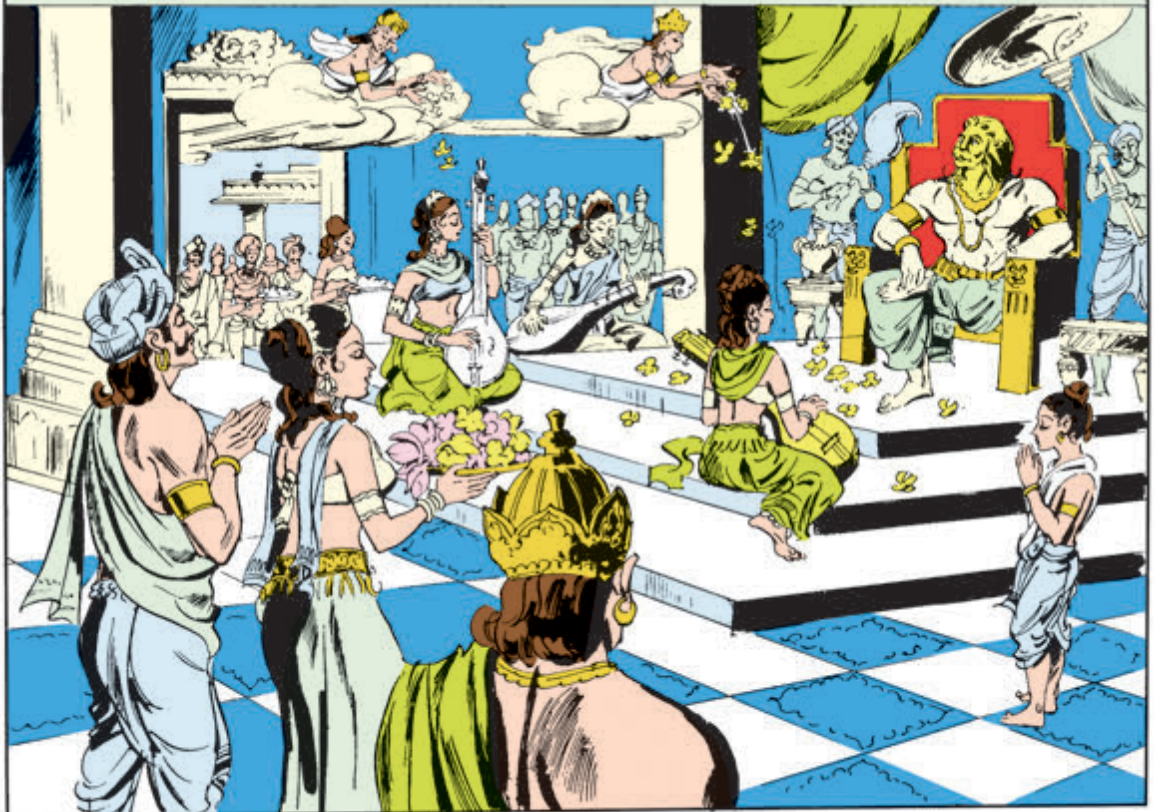
...CARRIED HIM TO THE THRESHOLD OF THE COURTROOM.



THERE HE KILLED HIM.



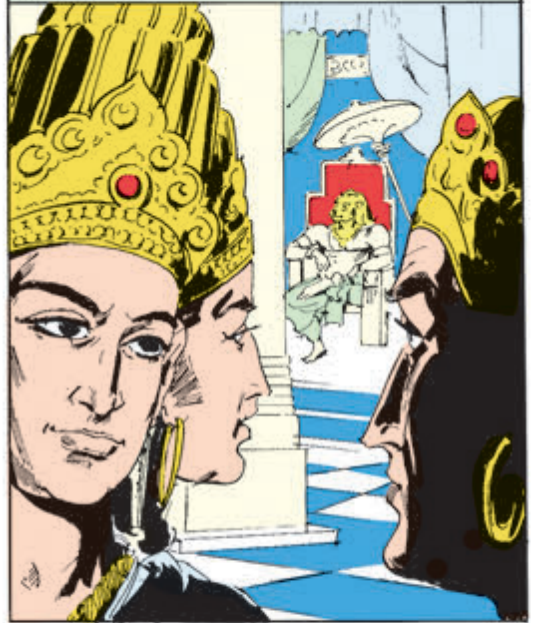
THEN NARA-SIMHA SEATED HIMSELF ON HIRANYAKASHIPU'S THRONE.



BRAHMA AND INDRA CAME TO PAY HOMAGE TO HIM.



BUT WERE WARAY OF APPROACHING VISHNU IN THIS TERRIFYING ASPECT.



THEN BRAHMA WENT TO PRAHLAD WHO WAS STANDING NEARBY.

O SON APPROACH AND PROPITIATE THE LORD!

SO BE IT.



NARA-SIMHA WAS TOUCHED.



O GREAT PRAHLAD! I AM PLEASED WITH YOU. ASK ME ANY BOON OF YOUR CHOICE.

I HAVE ALL I DESIRE. YOU HAVE ALLOWED ME TO TAKE REFUGE IN YOU.

BUT NARA-SIMHA INSISTED.



YET I WISH TO GRANT YOU A BOON.

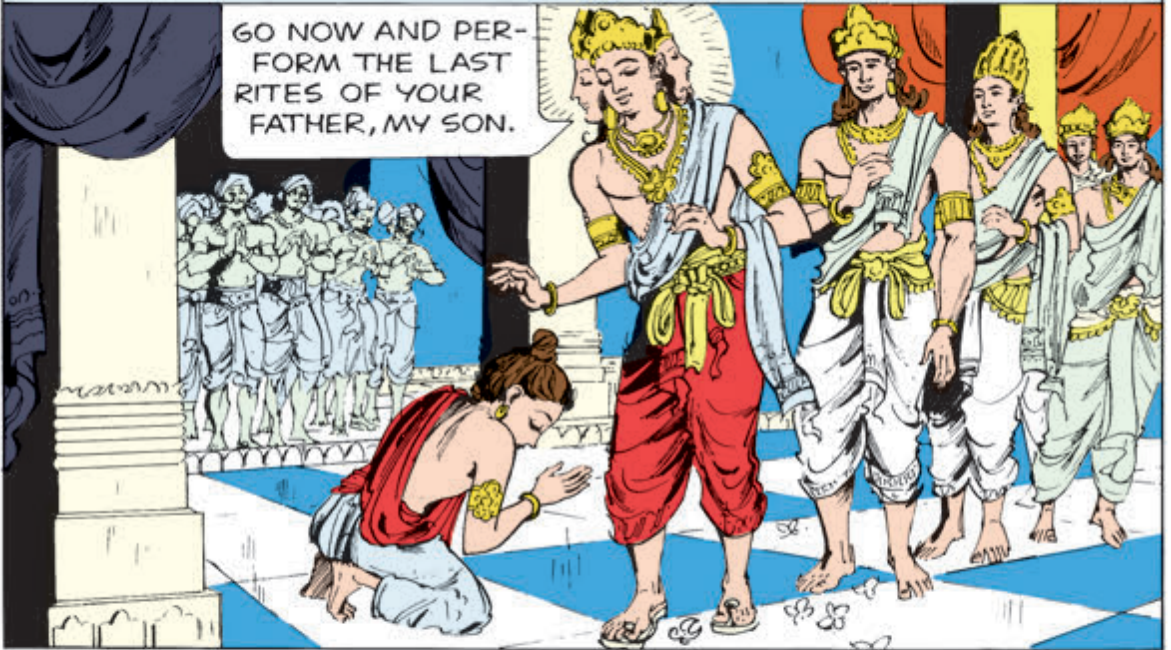
THEN LET MY FATHER BE PURIFIED OF ALL HIS SINS.

BEING YOUR FATHER HE IS ALREADY PURIFIED. REIGN IN HIS PLACE AND DO YOUR DUTIES.

SO BE IT.



NARA-SIMHA VANISHED. AND PRAHLAD BOWED TO BRAHMA AND TO THE OTHER CELESTIALS.



AFTER THE LAST RITES OF HIS FATHER WERE OVER, THE GODS WITH THE HELP OF THE ASURAS INSTALLED PRAHLAD ON THE THRONE AS LORD OF THE ASURAS. AND HE RULED WISELY AND WELL FOR MANY YEARS.



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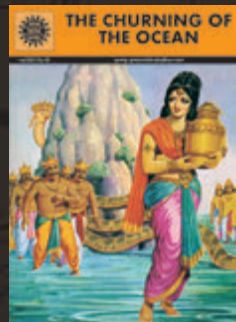
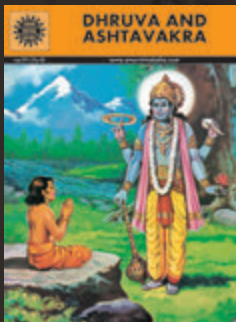


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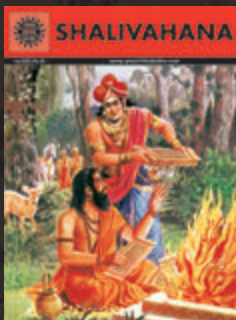
PRAHLAD

Prahlad drove his monstrous father to a murderous rage. He insisted on praising Lord Vishnu who was considered a sworn enemy by his father Hiranyakashipu. When he tried to punish his disobedient son, Hiranyakashipu's potent poisons turned to nectar while his lethal weapons fell harmlessly away. In this tale of bloodthirsty revenge, Prahlad's only defence is his devotion which dramatically puts an end to all evil.

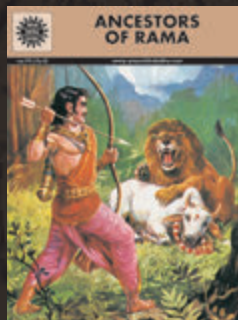
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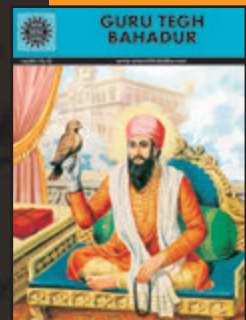
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